

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-28 and 30-35 over the prior art, principally U.S. Patent 6,233,565 (Lewis, et al.). Claims 1, 6, 13 and 24-26 were further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, on the grounds that the specification is not enabling; and Claims 15, 16, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Also, the Examiner objected to Claim 29 as not being in a proper form, and rejected Claim 29 under 35 U.S.C 101.

With respect to the rejection of the claims over the prior art, Claims 6, 7, 11, 13, 19, 20, 25-28, 31, 32, 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being fully anticipated by Lewis, et al. Claims 8-10 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Lewis, et al. in view of U.S. Patent 5,604,805 (Brands, et al.). Claims 1, 2, 5, 12, 14, 16, 18, 23, 24, 30 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Lewis, et al. in view of U.S. Patent 5,850,442 (Muftic). Claims 8, 14, 15, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Lewis, et al. in view of Muftic and Brands.

Independent Claims 1, 6, 13, 24, 25 and 26 are being amended to better define the subject matters of these claims. The rejection of Claims 1, 6, 13 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is respectfully traversed. Claims 15, 16, 21 and 22 are being amended to correct the dependencies of these claims. Claim 29 is being cancelled.

For the reasons discussed below, Claims 1-28 and 30-35 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. Also, the specification fully enables those of ordinary skill in the art to practice the subject matters of Claims 1, 6, 13 and 24-26; and Claims 15, 16, 21 and 22, as amended herein, are clear and definite. The Examiner is, accordingly, requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 6, 7, 11, 13, 19, 20, 25-28, 31, 32, 34 and

35 under 35 U.S.C. 102, and the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5, 8-10, 12, 14, 16-18, 23, 24, 30 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. 103. The Examiner is further asked to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1, 6, 13, 24-26, 15, 16, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 112, and to allow Claims 1-28 and 30-35.

In rejecting Claims 1, 6, 13 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, the Examiner argued that the specification does not provide enablement for a receipt that includes details for what the receipt has been given (or issue) and a reference to the owner (or designated owner) of the receipt. Applicants respectfully disagree.

It is noted that receipts having such information are specifically discussed in the specification at, among other places, page 7, lines 11-19. There, for example, it is explained that the party requesting the receipt provides a reference to the owner. This same information can simply be included in the receipt by the issuer of the receipt. Given this teaching of the patent application, those of ordinary skill in the art would be easily able to provide the receipts with the information described in Claims 1, 6, 13 and 24-26. In view of this express disclosure and teaching of the present application, the Examiner is respectfully asked to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1, 6, 13 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

With respect to the rejection of Claims 15, 16, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, the Examiner, in the Office Action, suggested changing the dependencies of these claims, and this opportunity is being taken to do that. In particular, Claims 15 and 16 are being amended to be dependent from Claim 14, and Claims 21 and 22 are being amended to be dependent from Claim 20. It is believed that these changes overcome the Examiner's

objections to Claims 15, 16, 21 and 22, and the Examiner is thus asked to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 1-28 and 30-35 over the prior art, Applicants submit that these claims patentably distinguish over the prior art because that prior art does not suggest or teach the procedures or apparatus of independent Claims 1, 6, 13, 24, 25 and 26 used to generate or to verify a receipt while maintaining the owner or designated owner anonymous or pseudonymous.

To best understand this, Applicants believe it may be helpful to review briefly the present invention and the prior art.

The present invention, generally, relates to procedures to securely prove ownership of pseudonymous or anonymous electronic receipts. With one procedure described in the present application, a receipt is generated using secure signature keys of the party requesting the receipt and the party generating the receipt. The receipt is then sent to a party, and the receipt can later be authenticated to prove ownership of the receipt. An important aspect of the invention is that it enables the owner of the receipt to remain anonymous or pseudonymous when presenting electronic receipts while securely proving ownership of the receipt.

The prior art does not disclose or suggest this aspect of the invention, as described in Claims 1, 6, 13, 24, 25 and 26.

More specifically, Lewis, et al describes a procedure for issuing receipts over the Internet. In this procedure, a user purchases goods or services over the Internet, from a server having a receipt generation module. Special transaction software manages the printing at the user of various communications. The purchase and receipt issuing process described in

Lewis, et al. is, in many respects, comparatively standard, except for the fact that it is over the Internet, and Lewis, et al. does not make any effort to keep the receipt owner anonymous or pseudonymous.

Muftic describes a procedure to perform secure electronic commercial transactions, and Brands discloses a cryptography procedure including a restrictive blind signature protocol. Neither Muftic nor Brands teach how to issue a receipt while maintaining the owner anonymous or pseudonymous, though.

Independent Claims 1, 6, 13, 24, 25 and 26 have been amended to emphasize this aspect of the invention. Specifically, Claims 1 and 24 are being amended to describe the limitation that the private signature key, which is used to generate the receipt, is examined to determine if it is associated with a specified public signature scheme while maintaining the receipt owner anonymous or pseudonymous. Claims 6 and 25, which are directed, respectively, to a receipt generation method and receipt generating device, describe the feature that the receipt is issued, including a reference to a designated owner and details for what the receipt has been given, to provide that designated owner with the receipt while maintaining that owner anonymous or pseudonymous.

Claims 13 and 26 are directed to a method and apparatus, respectively, for providing ownership of a receipt, and these claims describe the feature that the receipt includes information as for what the receipt has been issued and a reference to the designated owner of the receipt while maintaining that owner anonymous or pseudonymous.

As may be appreciated, this feature of the invention is of utility because it enables the owner or designated owner to remain anonymous or pseudonymous while still being able to securely prove ownership.

The other references of record have been reviewed, and these other references, whether considered individually or in combination, also do not disclose or suggest the above-discussed aspect of the invention.

Because of the above-discussed differences between Claims 1, 6, 13, 24, 25 and 26, and because of the advantages associated with those differences, these claims patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. Claims 2-5, 23 and 30 are dependent from Claim 1 and are allowable therewith; and Claims 7-12, 27 and 31 are dependent from, and are allowable with Claim 6. Similarly, Claims 14-22, 28 and 32 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claim 13. Claims 33, 34 and 35 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claims 24, 25 and 26 respectively.

Every effort has been made to place this application in condition for allowance. For the reasons set forth above, the Examiner is requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 6, 7, 11, 13, 19, 20, 25-28, 31, 32, 34 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. 102, and the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5, 8-10, 12, 14, 16-18, 23, 24, 30 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. 103. The Examiner is further asked to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1, 6, 13, 24-26, 15, 16, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 112, and to allow Claims 1-28 and 30-35.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' Attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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